



## Mass of the First Christians

This liturgical guide has been reconstructed from historical records, eyewitness accounts, theologians and the scriptures of Paul the Apostle. It is designed to be used in conjunction with [The Very First Bible](#) and will teach you how to conduct a *simple mass* during times of persecution and oppression just as the [first Christians](#) did.

### In the Beginnning...

At the dawn of Christianity very few structures were set aside for the sole purpose of conducting mass and purpose-built churches were few and far between. Instead, larger private homes were used and the mass was presided over by a 'Presbyter' - usually the owner of the home. A typical mass would consist of under ten people worshipping together.

**As dark times descend on Christians and mainstream churches abandon their flock to the whims of tyrannical governments or to the physical destruction of houses of worship, ordinary people will need to host and preside over services.** If you are called to become a Christian leader in your community you will need to know how to conduct a simple mass and lead others in prayer with the *confidence* that you're following the liturgical rites and teachings of the first Christians.

### Who?

Any baptized Christian man who believes Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that God was revealed through Him is qualified to lead a simple Mass. He will assume the title of **Presbyter**. The Mass as structured is non-denominational and does not favor one 'brand' of Christianity over another.

### Where?

Any home with a space large enough to accomodate up to ten people. Ideally, the home will have a large C-shaped couch or seating area. In some cases, Mass will have to be conducted underground in a 'catacomb church' like those used by the Christian Russians under Bolshevik persecution.

### When?

The first Christians met twice on Sunday - first at dawn for a Service of the Word with prayer and an oath not to partake in theft or adultery and again at the end of the day for Mass and a meal which was both real and sacramental. It symbolizes fellowship, sharing, unity and brotherhood. Saturday is a day of fasting.

## Sunday Mass

*The first Christians fasted on Saturday and celebrated Mass on Sunday*

### I.

#### Service of the Word at Dawn

**Presbyter (All sit):** AWAKE, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.  
HONOUR and glory through endless ages to the king of all the ages, the immortal,  
the invisible, who alone is God. Amen.

**All (kneel):** GLORY in the heights to God,  
on earth peace,  
to men favour.  
We Praise you,  
bless you,  
worship you,

laud you,  
we give you thanks  
for your great glory,  
O lord, King of heaven,  
God the Father all-powerful,  
Lord the only Son,  
Jesus Christ,  
and you, Holy Spirit.  
O Lord God,  
God's Lamb,  
the Father's Son,  
you take the world's sins away:  
have mercy on us.  
You take the world's sins away:  
accept our prayer.  
You sit at the Father's right hand:  
have mercy on us.  
For you alone are holy,  
you alone are Lord,  
O Jesus Christ,  
for God the Father's glory.  
Amen.

*- Morning Prayer and Oath*

**All (stand):** I RISE and pledge myself to God  
to do no deed at all of dark.  
This day shall be his sacrifice  
and I, unmoved, my passions' lord.  
I blush to be so old and foul  
and yet to stand before his table.  
You know what I would do, O Christ;  
O then, to do it make me able.

*- End Service of the Word and resumption of daily activities until Mass at the end of the day.*

## II.

### Mass

*- Opening Intercessory Prayer*

**Presbyter (arms outstretched) All (stand):** MAY God, the author of all  
endurance and all encouragement, enable you to be all of one mind  
according to the mind of Christ Jesus, so that you may all have but one heart  
and one mouth, to glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

May God, the author of our hope, fill you with all joy and Peace in your  
believing; so that you may have hope in abundance, through the power of  
the Holy Spirit. . . .

May God, the author of peace, be with you all, Amen.

God, who is the author of peace, will crush Satan under your feet before  
long. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**All:** And also with you, Amen.

*- Reading of Scripture*

**All (sit) Presbyter:** Any scripture from the Epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Romans, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, Ephesians, Laodiceans, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians) within pages 75-237 of [\*The Very First Bible\*](#) can be used here.

*- Sermon*

**Presbyter:** Bases sermon on scripture read above and applies it to events and issues facing the church and community. Material can also be found in The Gospel of the Lord (pages 1-72).

## III.

### Communion

*- Eucharistic Prayer*

**Presbyter:** THE Lord is with you.

**All:** May he be with your spirit too.

**Presbyter:** Set your hearts on the things above.

**All:** They are fixed on the Lord.

**Presbyter:** Let us give thanks to the Lord.

**All:** It is right and proper that we should.

**Presbyter:** We give you thanks, O God, through your dear Child, Jesus Christ, whom in this, the last of all periods of time, you sent to save and redeem us and to tell us what you wanted of us.

He is your Word, inseparable from you; you made all things through him and you were well pleased with him.

He did what you wanted him to do, and when he suffered, acquiring thereby a holy people for you, he stretched out his hands to free those who believed in you from suffering.

When he was handed over to undergo the suffering he had chosen himself—self, thereby to destroy death, to break the chains the Devil held us in, crush hell beneath his feet, give light to the just, make a covenant and manifest his resurrection: he took bread, gave thanks to you and said:

Take this and eat it: it is this body of mine that is to be broken for you.

In the same way, he took the chalice, saying:

This is my blood being shed for you. When you do this, you will be commemorating me.

Calling, then, his death and resurrection to mind, we offer you bread and a chalice and we thank you for enabling us to stand before you and serve you.

We ask you to send down your Holy Spirit on the offering holy Church makes you, to unite all who receive holy communion and to fill them with the Holy Spirit, for the strengthening of their faith in the truth.

So may we give you praise and glory, through your Child, Jesus Christ.

**All:** Amen.

**Presbyter:** Dispenses communion.

#### **IV.**

#### **Song & Closing Prayer**

**All:** O gladsome Light, O Grace  
of God the Father's face,  
th'eternal splendor wearing;  
celestial, holy, blest,  
our Savior Jesus Christ,  
joyful in Thine appearing!

Now, as day fadeth quite,  
we see the evening light,  
our wonted hymn outpouring;  
Father of might unknown,  
Thee, His incarnate Son,  
and Holy Ghost adoring.

To Thee of right belongs  
all praise of holy songs,  
O Son of God, Life-giver;  
Thee, therefore, O Most High,  
the world does glorify  
and shall exalt forever.

*- Closing Prayer of Perseverance*

**Presbyter:** YOUR prayers are more likely to be answered now, for it is easier to obtain what you ask when you are being persecuted. Beseech the good God, then, as earnestly as you can that we may all confess His name to the end, and that we too may emerge unscathed and glorious from the snares of this world and

its darkness.

As we have been linked together by charity and peace, and together have withstood persecution from the pagans, so may we rejoice together in the kingdom of heaven.

**All:** Amen.

**V.**

### **Fellowship Meal**

It was traditional for the first Christians to share a meal with each other after Mass, each person bringing some food that was equally divided among all. This was the fitting end to a day that began with a simple prayer at dawn, culminating in celebration of God, Christian fellowship and a shared meal.

The meal is also to be delivered to the infirm, sick or anyone unable to attend Mass.



*"For if righteousness come by the (Torah) law, then Christ died for nothing."* (Galatians 2:16)

*"We have been released from the (Torah) law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code"* (Romans 7:6)